

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided the present application. The title and claims 1-7, 10-27, and 29-36 are now present in the application. Claims 10, 11 and 23 have been amended. Claims 35 and 36 have been added. Claim 9 has been cancelled. Claims 1, 4, 7, 10, 11 and 12 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 1-7, 12-17, 19-22, 24-27 and 29-34 have been allowed. The Examiner also indicated that dependent claim 10, 11 and 18 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants greatly appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

By the present amendment, claims 10 and 11 have been rewritten into independent form to include the subject matter of their base claim 9. Accordingly, it is believed that claims 10 and 11 are in condition for allowance.

Specification

The title has been amended. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is entered. Entry of the above amendments to the title is earnestly solicited.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 9 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sato, U.S. Patent No. 6,131,457. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, claim 9 has been cancelled to expedite the prosecution, and claim 23 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 10. Accordingly, this rejection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are respectfully requested.

Additional Claims

Additional claims 35 and 36 have been added for the Examiner's consideration.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 35 and 36 are allowable due to their respective dependence on independent claim 11, as well as due to the additional recitations included in these claims. In addition, since the subject matter of claims 35 and 36 has already been presented in the previous Amendment (*i.e.*, claims 18 and 23), entry of claims 35 and 36 is earnestly solicited.

Favorable consideration and allowance of additional claims 35 and 36 are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but merely to show the state of the prior art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

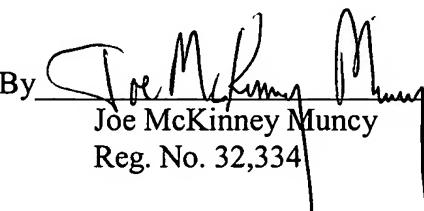
It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Joe McKinney Muncy, Registration No. 32,334 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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